

## INSafe Grand Opening

Ladies and Gentlemen, thank you for being here. I am Miguel Rivera, Indiana's Commissioner of Labor.

I would like to thank Jim Patterson of the Indianapolis Electrical Joint Apprenticeship Training Center and Tom O'Donnell of IBEW #481 for giving us access to this facility today.

I'd like to take a moment to introduce a few of our special guests.

- Benjamin Ramsey—Executive Director of the Indiana State Building and Construction Trades Council.
- Kenneth Gilbert—Indiana Area Director of Federal OSHA
- Rep. Carolene Mays—President of the *Indianapolis Recorder* and member of the House Committee on Commerce, Economic Development and Small Business
- Rep. Gerald Torr—Chair, House Committee for Employment and Labor

Thank you all for being here.

In the 135 days since I was appointed to this post, I have been disturbed by the number of workplace injuries and deaths in Indiana. Just over one month ago, I stood before a room of grieving families attending the Indiana Worker's Memorial. At this observance I said our promise was to never forget.

Remembering that somber day, I have been invigorated knowing today would be the beginning of a new promise. With the spirit of those we've lost, the Department of Labor looks toward the future with the commitment that we will give our best efforts to ensure all Indiana workers return home to their loved ones every night after work safe and sound.

Today, I am proud to announce the launch of IN Safe—an initiative representing the Department of Labor's promise of a proactive approach to safety. IN Safe's charge is not an easy one. It will be the front line in the critical effort to reduce workplace injuries, illnesses and deaths by providing focused, state-of-the-art safety and health information.

Workplace safety is not a new mission for the Department of Labor. In 1985, the Bureau of Safety Education and Training, or BuSET, was created to provide safety education. BuSET consultants were asked to provide workplaces advice about safety and health at the request of employers. The program, despite its merits and benefits, has been grossly underutilized. That is...until now.

With us today, I am happy to say, is our staff of IN Safe Consultants. We are proud of the work they have done and grateful they have agreed to join us in this aggressive statewide effort.

From this day forward, INSafe will help move the Department of Labor away from being a reactive ticket-writing agency. Through data analysis, interaction with customers and industry experts, and partnerships with local community groups, INSafe's proactive, strategic effort will bring us to a point where we can prevent hazards and injuries before they occur.

INSafe will operate completely separate from the Indiana Occupational Safety and Health Administration. Companies can request our advice and services with peace of mind knowing they will have INSafe's expertise without the threat of referrals to IOSHA.

Over the course of the next year, Indiana employees, safety directors and management will see INSafe make some significant changes in the availability and quality of safety information offered by the Department of Labor. INSafe will become a one-stop shop for all workplace safety and health needs. Through the department of Labor website, INSafe will offer unprecedented access to updated safety information, programs, courses and training. Our customers will be able to request consultative services online. All users will be able to view upcoming safety training opportunities through a web calendar. IN Safe will give customers the ability to sign up for IN Safe-sponsored training as well as find other safety training information

Safety and health consultative services are INSafe's core competency, the heart of our proactive efforts. Getting our consultants into workplaces to directly intervene in hazardous situations is the best defense against injury. This is an extremely valuable and sadly underutilized tool businesses have at their disposal. IN Safe provides these critical safety and health consultations at no cost to Indiana companies.

This is good news for Indiana's small businesses. Of 125,000 employers in Indiana, 120,000 are small businesses which employ 2.94 million Hoosiers, just over 97% of the workforce. IN Safe must focus its efforts here. Small businesses often do not have the resources to hire private consultants and certainly cannot afford serious IOSHA violations. INSafe will be a most helpful ally in keeping workers safe.

Not only is INSafe a resource for existing small businesses, but it can be a valuable economic development tool. INSafe's services will be vital to companies looking to relocate or start up in Indiana. What better opportunity to create a healthy work environment and quality safety plan than before hazards have a chance to appear?

Many small and medium-sized businesses are committing personnel and monetary resources to making their work environments safe. And so many more would like to do so with some direction. Those workplaces should be recognized for their commitment to employee safety and their commitment to excellence. IN Safe will immediately begin promoting the Indiana Safety Health Award Recognition Program, or INSHARP, as a valuable tool for small businesses. INSHARP gives companies the resources and expertise of INSafe consultants and stresses cooperation between management and labor in the creation of a detailed safety plan. Successful completion of INSHARP grants a

firm a one-year renewable exemption from IOSHA inspection. It amazed me when I learned that Indiana had only 2 participants in this fantastic program. That is...until now.

IN Safe will devote considerable time establishing partnerships with business, labor and trade organizations. Through these mutually beneficial partnerships, IN Safe will promote and offer safety services to untapped industries, companies and communities.

I am happy to announce today that we are in the are on the brink of launching our first partnership with the Indiana Chamber of Commerce. Through this cooperation IN Safe will provide the Chamber with safety resources and expertise, while the Chamber will give IN Safe a very big voice in the business community. We will look for partnership opportunities with other regional and local chambers and business-related organizations.

INSafe will reach out to Indiana's smaller communities and worker populations that have not been touched by any safety efforts. There is a growing non-English speaking population in Indiana. The largest and fastest growing is the Hispanic community. Non-English speaking workers are at a greater risk for injury on the job because they may not be able to read or comprehend safety instructions in English. INSafe is committed to developing bilingual and culturally-sensitive safety training information. We must take care of all of Indiana's workers.

To provide the same level of safety service to our customers, in conjunction with INSafe, I have formed the Hispanic Advisory Board. This group, made up of private and public sector leaders of the Hispanic community, will provide strategic and tactical advice for getting information into the hands of Hispanic workers. A few members of our Board are here today, and we appreciate their support.

Technology upgrades, cross-cultural outreach, promotion of our services and mounting a safety assault on just a fraction of 120,000 workplaces cannot happen at once; much as we wish it were so. We hope that we can continue to have your support and that you will be safety stewards by spreading the word about IN Safe to your constituencies.

In this time, in this economy, so much is driven by the bottom line. Being proactive to reduce workplace injuries and returning every Indiana worker home safe every night—*that* is our bottom line. Thank you.